

## Message Text

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ACTION AF-08

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03  
NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 MCT-01  
/067 W

-----111518Z 008455 /45

R 111320Z FEB 77

FM AMCONSUL ASMARA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4368

AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

INFO AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

CINCUSNAVEUR LONDON

COMNAVTELCOM WASHDC

USCINCEUR VAHINGEN

COMIDEASTFOR

NAVCOMMUNIT ASMARA

NAVCOMMSTA NEA MAKRI

CNO WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L ASMARA 0119

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS PFOR, ET SU

SUBJECT: SUDANESE REACTION TO FEBRUARY 10 DEMONSTRATION

REF: ASMARA 0117 (DTG 110530Z FEB 77)

1. SEVERAL HOURS AFTER THE CONCLUSION OF THE FEBRUARY 10 ANTI-SUDANESE DEMONSTRATION, I MET WITH THE ACTING SUDANESE CONSUL GENERAL ABDELMONIEM MUSTAFA ELAMIN. DESPITE THE APPARENT UNCERTAINTY SURROUNDING THE MORNINGS EVENTS, HE APPEARED RELAXED AND IN GOOD SPIRITS, AND FULLY PREPARED TO DISCUSS THE INCIDENT.

2. ALTHOUGH THE SUDANESE ARE TRADITIONALLY WELL INFORMED ON THE  
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UNDERCURRENTS IN ASMARA, ABDELMONIEM APPARENTLY HAD NO FORE-WARNING THAT THE DEMONSTRATORS WOULD BE DIRECTED TO MARCH TO THE SUDANESE CONSULATE AND RESIDENCE. THE FIRST INDICATION WAS THE ARRIVAL EARLY IN THE MORNING OF A STRONG DETACHMENT OF SECOND DIVISION TROOPS ALONG THE STREET ON WHICH BOTH THE CONSULATE AND RESIDENCE ARE LOCATED. ABOUT 9 AM, A CIVILIAN SECURITY OFFICIAL INFORMED ABDELMONIEM THAT ALTHOUGH THE DEMONSTRATION WAS PLANNED

TO PASS BY THE CONSULATE, NEITHER HE NOR HIS STAFF, NOR ANY SUDANESE PROPERTY WOULD BE HARMED. DISCRETION DICTATED, HOWEVER, THAT HE REMAIN AT HIS RESIDENCE.

3. AT ABOUT 10:30 THE FIRST GROUP OF MARCHERS ARRIVED BEFORE HIS RESIDENCE, HALTED AND A DELEGATION CAME FORWARD TO PRESENT A MEMORANDUM FOR DELIVERY TO PRESIDENT NUMEIRI. THE DELEGATION WAS LED BY A COPTIC PRIEST, WELL-KNOWN TO BE AVID FOR PUBLICITY. THE REMAINDER OF THE DELEGATION CONSISTED OF FOUR OTHER COPTIC PRIESTS AND A MUSLIM TRADITIONAL JUDGE. ABDELMONIEM ATTEMPTED TO INVITE THE SMALL GROUP INTO HIS HOUSE. BUT THE DELEGATION PREFERRED TO REMAIN AT THE GATE WHERE ETHIOPIAN MEDIA PHOTOGRAPHERS AND TV CAMERAMEN COULD RECORD THE EVENT. CONSEQUENTLY, ABDELMONIEM WENT TO THE SIDEWALK TO ACCEPT THE MEMORANDUM AND RE-ENTERED HIS COMPOUND.

4. THE MEMORANDUM, AS THE POSTERS, WAS IN AMHARIC OF WHICH ABDELMONIEM HAS NO WORKABLE KNOWLEDGE. AS HE HAD RELEASED HIS STAFF WELL BEFORE THE MARCH, HE HAD NO ONE TO TRANSLATE THE DOCUMENT, AND THEREFORE WAS IGNORANT OF ITS CONTENT UNTIL THE SUBSTANCE WAS GIVEN IN EPMG MEDIA THAT NIGHT. THE NOTE WAS BASICALLY A PROTEST AGAINST SUDANESE INVOLVEMENT IN THE ERITREAN INSURGENCY AND MADE NO REFERENCE TO REMOVAL OF THE OFFICIAL SUDANESE PRESENCE IN ASMARA.

5. AFTER RECEIVING THE MEMORANDUM, ABDELMONIEM COOLLY TOOK A POSITION ON THE BALCONY AND WATCHED THE VARIOUS GROUPS OF MARCHERS PASS BY. HE CLAIMED THAT THE COMMISSIONER OF POLICE WAS PERSONALLY DIRECTING THE MOVEMENT OF THE GROUPS, DETERMINING HOW LONG

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EACH GROUP SHOULD TARRY BEFORE THE RESIDENCE AND THEN SENDING THEM ON THEIR WAY. ABDELMONIEM SAID THAT THE MOOD OF THE CROWD WAS GENERALLY FRIENDLY AND THERE WERE NO VERBAL EXPRESSIONS OF ANTI-SUDANESE SENTIMENTS. ABDELMONIEM CLAIMED THAT AT NO TIME DID HE FEEL ENDANGERED BY THE CROWD. HE SPECULATED, HOWEVER, THAT THE INSURGENTS WOULD PROBABLY FEEL THAT THIS EPMG EXERCISE REPRESENTED A LOSS OF FACE FOR THEM AND WOULD CONCOCT SOME SORT OF RETALIATION AGAINST THE EPMG.

6. WHILE HE READILY ADMITTED THAT HE HAD OVER-ESTIMATED THE SANCTITY OF HIS SITUATION IN ASMARA (ASMARA 0076), HE BELIEVED THAT THE INTENT OF THE DEMONSTRATION WAS SOLELY FOR PROPAGANDA PURPOSES. THIS IS CONFIRMED BY THE FACT THAT THE EPMG APPARENTLY PROVIDED A SPECIAL COURIER FLIGHT TO TRANSPORT THE TV FILMS TO ADDIS TO BE AIRED THE EVENING OF THE DEMONSTRATION (THERE WERE NO COMMERCIAL FLIGHTS). ABDELMONIEM SAID THAT FOR THE MOMENT HE PERCEIVED NO GENUINE THREAT TO THE SUDANESE PRESENCE IN ASMARA, UNLIKE THAT OF HIS SUDANESE COLLEAGUE IN GAMBELA WHERE DEMONSTRATORS EARLIER THIS WEEK DEMANDED THAT THE CONSULATE

BE REMOVED.

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## Message Attributes

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**Disposition Date:** 22 May 2009  
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